LOUIS CARL BECKER

Throughout his many years' experience in the banking field, Louis Carl Becker has been with the First National Bank of Belen, in which he holds the position of President. Well known in state and national banking circles, he served for a three year period as a member of the executive council of the American Bankers Association in the late 1930's; was state vice-president of the National organization; and is a past president of the New Mexico Bankers Association.

He was born in Belen on May 19, 1882, the son of John and Anna (Vielstich) Becker. John Becker was born in Hanover, Germany, on May 28, 1850, a son of Johannes and Lucie (Kroehnke) Becker. Coming to this country in early manhood, he landed at New Orleans, but worked his way north, filling temporary jobs en route, until he reached Minnesota. There he worked as a stevedore and in harvesting grain. He later moved to Illinois to visit an uncle, and learned that his cousin, E. D. Franz, had gone to New Mexico and become a merchant. John Becker decided to join him. He traveled by the Missouri Pacific Railroad to Kansas City; thence by the old Kansas Pacific Railroad to Kit Carson. From there he traveled with a freighting caravan for six hundred miles across the plains to his destination at Los Lunas, arriving in August, 1871.

For two years he worked in the general store of L. and H. Huning, successors to his cousin, E. D. Franz, who had left for St. Louis. In 1873 he was placed in charge of the Hunings' branch store at Belen, and having been admitted to partnership, gave it the name of L. and H. Huning and Becker. He resigned in 1877 and founded a store of his own. He first conducted business in an adobe building, and in 1885 erected a second building, which served his purposes until 1898. He then built a brick store two stories in height. Continued expansion made still another structure necessary by 1917, when he occupied a modern department store building. The business was incorporated as John Becker Company in 1902. A history of 1925 lists John Becker as president and John Becker, Jr. as secretary and treasurer. Mr. Becker also erected the first grist mill in the city, in 1884. In 1902 he became one of the founders of The First National Bank of Belen, which was incorporated with a capital stock of Twenty-five Thousand Dollars. It was the first financial institution in the city. By 1925 capitalization had been increased to Fifty Thousand Dollars. Mr. Becker was at that time president of the bank and his son, Louis Carl, was cashier. John Becker, Jr., Paul B. Dalies and P. P. Simmons were vice-presidents. Mr. John Becker also played a vital role in bringing railroad service to Belen. When the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad was putting through its East and West cut-off in the early 1900's, he donated a substantial sum of money to have

the line built directly into Belen, instead of swinging further south as originally intended. Mr. Becker was also the first postmaster of Belen, holding office from 1873 to 1913. He was a founder of the Becker-MacTavish Company of Magdalena in Socorro County. He was a delegate to the New Mexico State Constitutional Convention of 1910.

His marriage to Anna Vielstich, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lueder Vielstich, of Lesum, Germany, took place November 2, 1877. She had come to the United States in the 1870's and the couple became acquainted in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She traveled by train and stage coach to Santa Fe where the wedding took place. The couple then traveled by stage to Belen where they made their home. She was seventy-two years of age at the time of her death on December 4, 1922.

The couple were the parents of the following children:

1. John Jr. - associated with his father in business
2. Louis C. - of whom further
3. Anita
4. Gustav - deceased
5. Lucie - deceased
6. Bernard C. - served in World War I

Louis C. Becker attended the public schools of Belen, graduated from high school in Albuquerque, and later attended the University of New Mexico and the University of Wisconsin. In 1905 he joined The First National Bank of Belen. For some years he served as cashier, and since the death of his father in 1932, has held his present position as President. He also serves as chairman of the bank's board of directors.

Mr. Becker is likewise a director of The First National Bank in Albuquerque, the Becker-Dalies Company, and the Belen Town and Improvement Company. He is president of the last named firm, and vice-president of the Becker-Dalies Company. From 1944 to 1948 he served as Mayor of Belen. From 1939 to 1947, Mr. Becker served on the Board of Regents of the New Mexico Military Institute.

In his home city he is a member of the Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club. A member and past master of his lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, he belongs to the higher bodies of the order. He is past watchman of the White Shrine of Jerusalen, and past patron of the Order of the Eastern Star. He is a Lutheran, and a member of the Belen Federated Church.

On September 11, 1907, at Ripon, Wisconsin, Louis Carl Becker married Laura Zinth, daughter of August and Louise (Mueller) Zinth. Mrs. Becker is a native of Ripon, known as "The Birthplace of the Republican Party". She has been a director of The First National Bank of Belen since 1932. She has been active in the Order of the Eastern Star since 1921, is a past Grand Matron of the Order. She is also active in the Order of Rainbow for Girls, a teen-age order for girls sponsored by the Masonic Order and Order of Eastern Star. She has worked with this Order since 1927 and is a member of the Supreme International Body.

BHHC 2-04-25

Louis Carl Becker